



Wilderness group is urging support for bighorn sheep

4-1-90

The Utah Wilderness Association is urging wildlife fans to attend public meetings and support the closure of three sheep grazing allotments in the Uinta Mountains.

"The livestock industry will be on hand and will use all their political muscle to open these areas to grazing," the group says in an alert mailed to supporters. "The bighorn can prevail only if your voice is heard!"

The Wilderness Association says Ashley National Forest is considering closing the presently unused allotments, which are in the eastern area of the Uintas. They are roadless areas immediately east of the High Uintas Wilderness.

According to the association, this country is called "The Bollies," which are rounded mountain ridges flanked by Alpine meadows, small lakes, glacial cirques, forests and streams. The terrain is home to marten, moose, goshawks and bighorn sheep.

"The Whiterocks River and Chepeta Lake allotments have been vacant since 1983, and Lakeshore Basin since 1987," said George Nickas, the association's assistant coordinator. However, last year the Lakeshore Basin Allotment was used on a temporary basis for livestock, and both the Chepeta Lake and Lakeshore Basin allotments

were used in 1988.

In 1989, the association appealed the Forest Service decision to use the Lakeshore Basin for sheep on a temporary basis, Nickas said. He said the agency refused to rule on the appeal during the grazing season, then dismissed it after the season on the ground that there were no livestock there at the time.

The appeal was launched because bighorn sheep were seen in the area, and the native sheep frequently die of diseases carried by domestic sheep.

Allowing grazing in the area "could spell doom for the Uintas' bighorn sheep — bighorns that were reintroduced after years of work by many individuals, agencies and organizations," he said.

The Wilderness Association provided this schedule for hearings, all of which begin at 7 p.m.:

- Wednesday, April 4, Vernal, Uintah County Building, commission chamber, 152 E. 100 North.
- Thursday, April 5, Duchesne, Duchesne County Courthouse, in the courtroom, 50 E. 100 South.
- Monday, April 9, Salt Lake City, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources auditorium, 1596 W. North Temple.



Left, desert bighorn sheep are superb climbers.